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ABSTRACT

An evaluator-manager interaction model is developed for predicting the impact of evaluation and research findings. Instruments are developed for measuring the variables of interpersonal involvement, impact of evaluation, and managerial style in the relationship between evaluator and manager. The hypothesis advanced suggests that evaluators can improve their efficiency and impact by shifting the bulk of their interpersonal involvement towards managers who are more reluctant to use evaluation data to change their ongoing educational programs. (Authors/LH)

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INCREASING THE USE OF EVALUATION INFORMATION:
An Evaluator-Manager Interaction Model

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by

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Introduction

Several researchers have emphasized the importance of the relationships between program evaluators and key decision-makers for achieving substantial utilization of evaluation findings (Cox, 1977, Holley, 1978, Patton, 1978). After reviewing the literature on use of evaluation information, Cox concludes that "improving utilization is not going to be so much a matter of training managers in the subtleties of research methodology and interpretation as it will be training evaluators in organizational and political realities and communication skills and having them placed in organizations so that they are in extensive contact with relative administrators" (Cox, 1977, p.508). Our own survey of special education program staff members supports Cox's conclusion, highlighting the need for evaluators to develop "an increased understanding of special education staff, programs, and constraints." (Drezek, Note 1)

Hypothesis

Somewhat less has been said, however, on how the personality or managerial style of the decision-maker effects utilization of the data. We hypothesize that *increased interpersonal involvement between the evaluator and the manager (key decision-maker) will lead to increased impact and utilization of evaluation findings and that the strength of this effect will depend upon the*

manager's "style." That is, we believe the effects of interpersonal involvement will be of less importance for managers who already creatively generate and use data than for managers whose efforts are directed primarily toward program survival or toward the enhancement of the program's image.

This paper represents our initial exploratory phase in which we attempted to clarify our conceptual framework and develop instruments to measure the key variables--interpersonal involvement, impact of evaluation, and managerial style.

Interpersonal Involvement

We selected two potential ways of measuring interpersonal involvement. One method is the use of a task code (see Attachment 1) which will indicate the proportion of time an evaluator spends vis-a-vis with project staff for each project.

Our second approach to measuring interpersonal involvement is to ask the manager as to the extent he was involved in formulating evaluation questions, interpreting findings, and generating recommendations. Two five point items were devised for this (see Attachment 2, part I).

In addition to cooperatively developing and carrying out an evaluation plan and going over findings, interpersonal involvement contains other more qualitative aspects. Among those aspects are:

(1) Developing an interest in the project--discovering the manager's goals, feelings, and values.

(2) Sharing your perspective--letting the manager know how you feel and think.

(3) Developing mutual respect--recognizing each other's strengths and weaknesses and allowing for differences in opinion.

(4) Attempting to meet each other's needs and compromising when necessary.

Impact of Evaluation

At our education service center the evaluation plan consists of formulating several questions and producing a series of documents to answer these questions. Therefore, we decided that one way to assess impact would be to have an independent person ask managers about the impact of three evaluation documents chosen at random. Six areas of potential impact were chosen for probing by an independent consultant. Managers would be asked as to whether the document (1) changed the way services are provided, (2) changed program management, (3) led to a reallocation of resources, (4) influenced the selection of goals and objectives, (5) led to new ideas, or (6) had any other form of impact. Managers are asked to state specific instances for each area of impact (see Attachment, part II).

Managerial Style

The most difficult but probably the most creative aspect of our task was to define managerial style in a manner relevant to the manager's probable use of evaluation data. We looked at how managers processed information from three perspectives (1) primary purpose of actions, (2) basis for actions, and (3) use of information. We loosely related managerial style for processing information to an individual's stage of development ranging from a position of insecure dependency to one of creative self-actualization. With respect to managerial style this continuum divided itself into five categories which we labeled "tactical," "political," "cybernetical," "analytical," and "experimental."

A manager who is in the first category--"tactical"--is one whose prime focus is ensuring the survival of his/her program. A manager whose efforts are directed toward gaining acceptance and enhancing the image of his/her program we label "political." The manager who seeks achievement within the limited framework of the existing administrative structure we label "cybernetical," and the manager who seeks to achieve goals beyond those established

within the existing administrative structure we label "analytical." Finally, the self-actualized, creative person is represented by the "experimental" manager, who actively manipulates his/her environment. From this continuum we developed a rough measure of "managerial style for processing information." (See Attachment 3).

Other Considerations

As a secondary hypothesis we predict that in actual fact evaluators tend to spend less time with managers who score low on our scale of managerial style--those people generally resistant to the whole process of evaluation. Although bypassing these managers may make it easier for the evaluator to produce a document containing evaluation findings, this practice neglects the real objective of evaluation--utilization of information leading to program improvement. Moreover, this practice causes evaluators to spend less time with the very people who, in our opinion, should receive more attention. We hypothesize that the best way to deal productively with "tactical" or "political" managers is to fully involve them in all phases of the evaluation process--even though this strategy may require that the evaluation plan initially be limited to only a few crucial areas of the program.

Note that the behavior of any particular manager fluctuates. A manager at one point in time or in regards to a specific issue may respond with a style that is not his/her usual. Furthermore, a manager's style is likely to change as the person becomes more familiar with the evaluator and the evaluation process. Typically, the beginning of a manager-evaluator relationship requires extensive sharing of information and developing rapport.

One possible means of testing our hypothesis would be to use a manager as his/her own control and do a before and after study with the intervention being increased interpersonal involvement. However, if the hypothesis is tested across managers as is our intention, then managers must be matched

according to "style" as the probablilty of greater utilization of evaluation findings by "experimental" and "analytical" managers than "political" or "tactical" ones is built into our measure of managerial style.

Summary

In conclusion, we have formulated an evaluator-manager interaction model for predicting impact of evaluation. We have developed tentative instruments for measuring the variables of interpersonal involvement, impact of evaluation, and managerial style. We can now test our hypothesis that increased interpersonal involvement between evaluator and manager will lead to increased use of evaluation data with managerial style as a moderator variable; that is, the extent of involvement between evaluator and manager will be of particular importance for managers rated "tactical" or "political." If our conceptualization is correct, evaluators can improve their efficiency and impact by shifting the bulk of their interpersonal involvement away from managers who should be given the data to use independently to managers who are more reluctant to use evaluation data to change their programs.

References

Cox, Gary B. "Implications for the Utilization of Program Evaluation Information" Evaluation Quarterly 1:3 (August, 1977) pp. 449-508

Holley, Freda. "What it takes to win: Factors in the utilization of evaluation findings for educational improvement," Paper prepared for the National Institute of Education, August 1978

Patton, Michael. Utilization-Focused Evaluation, Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1978

Reference Note

Drezek, Stan, Jay Alexander, Susan Donohoe, and Elaine Sebald. "ESC-20's Special Education Staff's Evaluation of Evaluation Services" August, 1979.

Attachment 1

TASK CODE CATAGORIES

TASK CODE

1 NEEDS ASSESSMENT
*1.1 Consultation with Center personnel desiring data.
1.2 File search for previously obtained data.
1.3 Preparation of data collecting instruments.
1.4 Selecting sample, collecting data.
1.5 Tabulating, processing & analyzing results.
1.6 Report preparation
*1.7 Consultations to interpret & explain findings.
1.8 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to funded project
NON-CHARGEABLE: If a new proposal.

2 PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT
*2.1 Conferences, meetings, & discussions
2.2 Reviewing objectives
2.3 Preparing the evaluation section.
2.4 Reading or reviewing proposals for comment.
2.5 Writing complete proposal
2.6 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If a continuation proposal.
NON-CHARGEABLE: If a new proposal

3 EVALUATION PLANNING
3.1 Consultation within evaluation staff
3.2 Preparing the Evaluation Plan
CHARGEABLE: If related to funded project

4 DATA COLLECTION
4.1 Developing or selecting instruments
4.2 Travel time connected with collecting data.
*4.3 Conducting interviews; telephone or in-person.
4.4 Observations; workshops, schools, centers, etc.

TASK CODE

4.5 Administering exams, tests, questionnaires, etc.
4.6 Distributing & collecting questionnaires
4.7 Briefings pertaining to data collection
4.8 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to funded project

5 DATA PROCESSING
5.1 Developing a record keeping system
5.2 Processing workshop evaluation forms.
5.3 Tabulating or scoring other instrument data.
5.4 Preparation for card punching & computer run.
5.5 Statistical analysis of data
5.6 Reviewing records, reports, or other information.
5.7 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to funded project

6 REPORTING EVALUATION
6.1 Writing findings, memoranda, interim, or final reports.
*6.2 Disseminating evaluation results
6.3 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to funded project

7 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
7.1 Travel time connected with providing assistance.
7.2 Conducting or participating in workshops
7.3 Other assistance provided
7.4 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to a funded project

TASK CODE

8 INTERACTION WITH PROJECT STAFF
8.1 Meetings involving learning about program
8.2 Contact about developing evaluation plan
8.3 Briefings, conferences, & sign-off of plans
8.4 Verbally conveying findings or results of evaluation
8.5 Providing technical consultation
8.6 Formulating recommendations
8.7 Consultations involving using evaluation data.
8.8 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to a funded project

9 INTERNAL PROCEDURES
9.1 All inservice sessions & retreat
9.2 Center, component, & unit meetings
9.3 Area conferences & workshops
9.4 Special studies & projects
9.5 Preparation of professional papers
9.6 Screening applicants for employment
9.7 Attendance at professional meetings
9.8 Administrative & Supervising
CHARGEABLE: If related to a funded project. Prorated for personnel with split funding

10 ALL ABSENCES
10.1 Vacation
10.2 Sick
10.3 Personal
10.4 Jury/military
10.5 ESC-20 Holidays
10.6 Other
CHARGEABLE: Prorated for personnel with split funding.

* EXCLUSIVE OF DIRECT INTERACTION WITH PROJECT STAFF

Attachment 2

IMPACT OF EVALUATION SERVICES

Purpose: By identifying the type of services which lead to impact, we may increase the future impact of Evaluation Services.

Instruction: The following three documents represent all or a select sample of the work Evaluation Services has done for your program. I will let you review each one of these one at a time so you can refresh your memory. Then I will ask you some questions regarding their impact on your program.

Document Title:_____

Program:_____ Date of Document_____ # of pp._____

Person Interviewed_____Date_____

I. Involvement

1) How involved were you at the beginning of this work such as choosing the subject, formulating the questions, selecting items, etc.?

1 = not involved 2 = limited involvement 3 = moderate involvement 4 = considerable involvement 5 = extensive involvement

2) How involved were you during and at the completion of this work such as receiving feedback, discussing findings, going over recommendations, ect.?

1 = not involved 2 = limited involvement 3 = moderate involvement 4= considerable involvement 5 = extensive involvement

II. Impact

Rate the extent of impact this document has had in each of the following areas using the code:

1 = no impact 2 = limited impact 3 = moderate impact 4 = considerable impact 5 = extensive impact

Code

1 2 3 4 5 (1) Led to changes in the way services are provided.

Specify:

Code

1 2 3 4 5 (2) Led to changes in the way the program is managed.

Specify:

1 2 3 4 5 (3) Led to a reallocation of resources (personnel time, monies, materials).

Specify:

1 2 3 4 5 (4) Influenced the selection of goals and objectives or the assignment of program priorities.

Specify:

1 2 3 4 5 (5) Led to or provided new ideas or ways of looking at the program.

Specify:

1 2 3 4 5 (6) What other ways did this document and the interactions relating to it have an impact on this program.

Specify:

[Sections I. and II. are repeated for two additional document.]

III. In addition to the documents we have discussed, can you specify any other ways Evaluation Services has had a "considerable" or "extensive" impact on your program?

Attachment 3

MANAGERIAL STYLE for Processing Information

Purpose: To determine the type of managers you work with.

I. Name:_____ Program or Project:_____ Manager:_____

II. Read the descriptions in the boxes for each of the three areas. Then note the category most descriptive of the above named manager and assign a number. (You may use decimals if you like).

	5.0 - 4.5 - 4.0 - 3.5 - 3.0 - 2.5 - 2.0 - 1.5 - 1.0				
	Experimental	Analytical	Cybernetical	Political	Tactical
1) Primary purpose of actions Rating:_____	Find the "best" or "elegant" way to satisfy the needs for which the program was set up within the broadest framework.	Find a "good" way to satisfy the needs for which the program was set up within a broad framework.	Meet program goal/objectives within a limited framework.	Make the program "look good" to a host of external parties.	Insure the continuation/ survival of the program.
2) Basis for action Rating:_____	Generates, considers, and tests program options.	Generates and considers program options.	Responds to new information to make program changes.	Responds to problems/demands to make program changes.	Reacts to unsettling elements in an effort to maintain the existing structure.
3) Use of Information Rating:_____	Generates, collects, and systematically organizes a variety of information.	Collects and systematically organizes a variety of information.	Systematically organizes incoming information.	Collects and organizes "required" or "requested" information.	Maintains limited and "select" information to support position.